

Sūrah Qāf

A Brief Look at the *Sūrahs* of the Group

With this *sūrah* begins the sixth group. Altogether there are seventeen *sūrahs*. Among these the first seven *sūrahs* – Qāf, Dhāriyāt, Tur, Najm, Raḥmān and Wāqī‘ah – are Makkan. Some codices mention that Sūrah Raḥmān is Madīnan; however, it will become evident from its *tafsīr* that this opinion is baseless. Not one single verse of the *sūrah* is Madīnan what to speak of the whole *sūrah*. The next ten *sūrahs* after Sūrah Wāqī‘ah – Hadid, Mujādalah, Hashr, Mumtaḥinah, Şaff, Jumu‘ah, Taghābun, Ṭalāq and Taḥrīm are Madīnan.

The comprehensive central theme of this whole group is resurrection on the Day of Judgement. It will be seen highlighted in all its Makkan *sūrahs*. Though the basic topics of the Qur’ān have also been mentioned in this group the way they are in other groups, however, they are mentioned under this comprehensive central theme. Analogously, the Madīnan *sūrahs* included in this group too are subservient to this theme. The necessary corollary of faith in being resurrected again is complete obedience to God and His Prophet (sws). In the Madīnan *sūrahs*, those requisites of this very obedience are mentioned which were necessitated by the circumstances of revelation.

In the Makkan *sūrahs*, the debate is against the beliefs and notions of the disbelievers of the Quraysh, and it is they who are primarily the addressees in these *sūrahs*. If the Prophet (sws) and the Muslims are addressed, then the nature of this address is to assure and comfort them. In the Madīnan *sūrahs*, the Prophet (sws) and the Muslims are addressed. In particular, the weaknesses of those people are discussed who claimed to have faith in God and the Prophet (sws) but were not yet fully aware of the requisites of faith. In this regard, the People of the Book too are discussed. One reason for this is that in that period they had jumped in to support the Quraysh and oppose Islam. The second reason for this is that most Hypocrites which had penetrated into the ranks of the Muslims were under the influence of these People of the Book.

Central Theme

The central theme of this *sūrah* is to substantiate life after death. When the Qur’ān informed people that once they die, they will be raised to life

again and will be held accountable before the Almighty for their words and deeds, the Quraysh frowned at this. They contended that a person from amongst themselves by claiming to be a prophet is warning them that after death people will be raised to life again; how is it possible that once people die and decay, they will be re-created. In this *sūrah*, this very notion of the people that the Day of Judgement is improbable is discussed and the objections raised about it are answered.

Analysis of the Discourse

Verses (1-5)

The grandeur and magnificence of the Qur'ān bear witness that it is the word of God. Those who are regarding it as the work of a poet or a soothsayer are merely doing so as an excuse to deny the Day of Judgement. They are actually confounded by the fact that someone from amongst themselves is warning them that after they die and become dust they will be returned to life again. This according to them is very unlikely. Actually pride and vanity have led them to reject the Qur'ān and owing to this reason they are calling it a work of poetry and soothsaying. The Qur'ān does not belong to these categories; it is a truth and since they have denied this truth, they are in an acute state of mental confusion and obvious contradiction. They should be aware that even what the earth consumes of their bodies is in the knowledge of God and with Him is a register which records all what they say and do.

Verses (6-11)

A reference is made to the signs of the heavens and the earth which if benefited from bear evidence to the Day of Judgement and to the reward and punishment that will be given to mankind on that Day as well as to the belief of *tawhīd* (monotheism). These signs testify to the power and wisdom of the Almighty and to the various means of sustenance He has created in the heavens and the earth for mankind. These signs are meant to remind and caution those who are humble and those who turn to God.

Verses (12-14)

The disbelievers of the Quraysh are warned that they should not deny the truth because of pride and arrogance. Nations before them who were guilty of this crime were totally destroyed, and if they continue with this attitude, their fate will be no different.

Verses (15-18)

The Almighty's attributes of Knowledge and Creativity which prove the certainty of the Day of Judgement are alluded to and a reference is

also made to the arrangement He has made for the security and protection of the records of all the deeds and utterances of mankind.

Verses (19-35)

A vivid description of the Day of Judgement is drawn: The details of the dreadful fate the disbelievers will encounter and the good fate the believers will meet are highlighted.

Verses (36-37)

The Quraysh are warned that they must not be overcome by the pride of the power they possess and must not vainly reckon that their glory and grandeur are eternal: Many other nations, who had much more power and splendour were destroyed at the very height of their dominance and authority; they could not even find any room in the vastness of the earth to hide from the ruthless law of retribution. Indeed, in the account of these nations is a lesson for people whose hearts are heedful and who earnestly give ear.

Verses (38-45)

The Prophet (sws) is urged to persevere and to persist in the cause of truth, and seek perseverance from Allah with the help of prayer. He is told to defer the matter of his enemies to the Day of Judgement, which is certain to come. Furthermore, he is assured that his only responsibility is to warn them of this Day; to make them accept faith is not his responsibility. He should only admonish through this very Qur'ān those who fear Allah, and if they are making of fun it, they themselves will face its consequences.

Text and Translation

Section I: Verses (1-15)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ (١) بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ (٢) أَيُّدًا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ (٣) قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ (٤) بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ (٥) أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ (٦) وَالْأَرْضِ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ (٧) تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ

(٨) وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ (٩) وَالتَّخْلُ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ (١٠) رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَيِّتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ (١١) كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ (١٢) وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ (١٣) وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ (١٤) أَفَعَيَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ (١٥)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

This is Sūrah Qāf. By the glorious Qur'ān! In fact, these people were confounded by the fact that a warner from amongst themselves had come to them. So these disbelievers had said: "It is a very strange thing that after we die and become dust, we would be returned to life again. Such a return is very improbable." (1-3) gather

Even what the earth consumes of their bodies is in Our notice and with Us is also a preserving book. In fact, they have denied the truth after it has come to them. So they are now in a state of open contradiction in views. (4-5)

Have they not observed the sky above them? How We have fashioned and adorned it, and it has no fissure in it. And We spread the earth and set upon it mountains, and brought forth in it all kinds of beautiful things for the insight and reminder of for every heedful person. And We sent down blessed water from the skies with which We thence brought forth gardens and the harvest grain and tall palm trees stacked with clusters of dates as a means of sustenance for men, And thereby We enlivened a dead piece of land. Likewise, after death shall you rise from the earth. (6-11)

Before them the people of Noah and the dwellers of the al-Rass valley, the Thamūd, the 'Ād, the Pharaoh, the brethren of Lot, the companions of al-Aykah and the people of Tubb'a also denied. All of them denied the messengers; so Our punishment descended upon them. Were We not able to create the first time? In fact, these people are in doubt about being created a second time. (12-15)

Explanation

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ (١)¹

ق is the name of this *sūrah*. The inchoative (*mubtadā'*) here is also suppressed, as has been indicated at many instances in this *tafsīr*. If this

1. This is Sūrah Qāf. By the glorious Qur'ān!

suppression is unfolded, the meaning would be: This is Sūrah Qāf.

The word مُجِيدٌ means “glorious” and “exalted”. It has been used in the Qur’ān as an attribute both for God and for the Qur’ān itself. Every discourse is a reflection of its author. Just as God is glorious and exalted, His word is also glorious and exalted and this is evident from each and every verse of the Qur’ān. It is not possible that a person of taste read or hear the Qur’ān and be not impressed and over-awed by its glory and majesty. If someone is not influenced by its glory and majesty, then it only means that he is a thick-headed person and that his heart has totally become devoid of the ability to savour the truth. This discourse would have shattered the mountains to pieces had it been revealed to them what to speak of human beings, as is referred to by the Qur’ān.

The sentence وَالْقُرْآنَ الْمَجِيدَ signifies an oath. The Almighty has sworn by this exalted Book. I have been explaining at various places of this *tafsīr* that all such oaths signify bearing witness. They are sworn to bear witness on the a claim which forms the complement of oath. This oath substantiates its complement even though the latter is not mentioned in words. The complement of oath (*muqṣam ‘alayh*) is suppressed at places where the context is enough to indicate it. A very clear example of such a suppression exists in Sūrah Ṣu‘ād: 37:1-3.² By reflecting on the discourse, it becomes evident that the glory and majesty of the Qur’ān is sworn by to refute the claim of people who regard it to be of the category of poetry, magic, soothsaying and inspiration of Satan. By presenting the majesty of the Qur’ān as evidence, these people are warned that it does not belong to these genres. Its own existence bears witness to the fact that its source are not these ignoble things; in fact it is a revelation sent down by God Almighty through Gabriel and its origin is the guarded tablet. In an exactly similar context, it is said in Sūrah Burūj:

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ (٨٥: ٢١-٢٢)

In fact, this is an exalted Qur’ān and its origin is in the preserved tablet. (85:21-22)

This same topic is mentioned in Sūrah Takwīr in the following words:

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ

2. For details, see: Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 5, 509-510.

رَجِيمٍ فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ (٥٠: ١٩-٢٧)

This is the word brought by a noble messenger. He is endued with great power and held in honour before the Lord of the Throne. He is obeyed and moreover very trustworthy. And this companion of yours is not one possessed, and he saw him in the clear horizon and he is not avaricious for the Unseen, and this is not the utterance of an accursed devil. Whither then are you going? This is nothing but a reminder to the people of the world. (59:19-27)

It is to this exaltedness and majesty of the Qur'ān that besides other verses like: (٤٢:٤١) لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ (falsehood cannot reach it from in front of it nor from behind, (41:42)) and لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (none touch except the purified, (56:79)) point to. The arguments cited at the end of Sūrah Shu'arā' in order to absolve the Qur'ān from the blame of being a poetical utterance and soothsaying have already been explained in the explanation of the verse. It would be worthwhile to specially look up what has been written under the following verse: (٢١٠-٢١١) وَمَا تَنْزَلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ (it was not the devils who brought this down; neither are they worthy of it nor is it in their power, (26:210-211)).

The implication is that the miraculous eloquence and supreme wisdom of the Qur'ān are enough to refute people who are ignoring the warnings of the Qur'ān regarding the Hereafter by taking refuge in the excuse that it is not divine revelation and is in fact a revelation from Satan. Naïve are those who regard it to be inspired from Satan. It is not the utterance of Satan or some jinn; it has been revealed by the Almighty Who is mighty and wise. It is not an ordinary discourse; it is unique and unparalleled.

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ (٢) أَئِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ (٣)

The word بَلْ here shows that the Qur'ān has regarded this objection to be mere excuse to escape the reality. If the insinuations of this بَلْ are divulged, the whole discourse would be something to the effect: The majesty and exaltedness of the Qur'ān alone is sufficient to refute those who regard the Qur'ān to be inspired by Satan or some jinn; the real

3. In fact, these people were confounded by the fact that a warner from amongst themselves had come to them. So these disbelievers had said: "It is a very strange thing that after we die and become dust, we would be returned to life again. Such a return is very improbable."

reason for their evasion is not what they are expressing but it is that they are surprised at the fact that a person from amongst themselves is warning them – warning them that after dying they will be raised to life again. Since regarding someone to be a messenger of God weighs down heavily on their hearts, they have started saying that how can they be raised to life again after they die and their bodies decay and such a thing is very improbable. A deep deliberation on this verse will show that in the view of the Qur’ān the real reason of their evasion is their arrogance: they are not ready to accept someone among them as a messenger of God; for this reason, they do not accept the Qur’ān to be the word of God and regard the Hereafter to be an unlikely event. In other words, had arrogance not got the better of them, they were not so thick headed as to not distinguish between a divine discourse and the nonsensical utterance of soothsayers and be unable to understand the arguments which the Qur’ān is presenting before them to validate the Day of Judgement.

The details of this arrogance can be seen in the previous *sūrahs*. In the first place, these people were never convinced that a messenger was needed to guide them and if in the second place they were to some extent convinced of this, they reckoned that if the Almighty intended to send a messenger He would have chosen an angel for this purpose or someone among the leaders of Makkah and Ṭā’if. In the presence of these messengers, how is it possible that He appoint a messenger who is a pauper.

The answers to these objections have been given in detail in the previous *sūrahs*, in particular *sūrahs* of the fourth group which begin with Sūrah Furqān. The comprehensive central theme of that group is to affirm the prophethood of Muḥammad (sws). Here, keeping in view the central theme of this particular group, those objections are dealt with which they would raise on death and on the possibility of resurrection. They would use these objections, as is indicated earlier, an excuse to oppose the Prophet (sws).

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ (٤)⁴

Raising the dead back to life is being regarded as improbable because these people think that it is impossible for body parts to be put together once they decay and decompose within the earth. The reason for this misconception is that they analogously regard the knowledge of God to be like their own whereas the knowledge of God is all-embracing. The parts

4. Even what the earth consumes of their bodies is in Our notice and with Us is also a preserving book.

of a human body which decompose in the earth are well in His knowledge; nothing is hidden from Him. How can anything be hidden from someone who has created everything and on whose command death overcomes a person. The words used in Sūrah Mulk are: *أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ*: (would He not know Who has created? (67:14)). And when He knows, He will make available all these body components and create bodies afresh. He will not be bothered the least for this task. He created everything from mere nothingness and was not pushed to the slightest; how can He face any difficulty in gathering their dispersed body parts?

The words *وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيفٌ* signify the fact that except for God's personal knowledge, He has set up a register to preserve the record of everything; written in this register is who is buried in which section of the earth and where his body parts are; similarly, also recorded are all his deeds and words. Just as naïve people are confronted with this doubt about the Hereafter that who can possibly gather the decayed parts of human beings which have become part of the earth and give them new physical forms, they are also similarly afflicted with the doubt that who can possibly keep record of all the words and deeds of each and every individual so that he can one day call all to account and reward or punish them? These words dispel this doubt as well: the Almighty has preserved the record of all the words and deeds of humankind in a register.

Preserving this record could have been a source of wonder for the Arabs of the times of the Prophet (sws); however, if a person aware of the scientific advancements of today has doubts about this claim of the Qur'ān, then the greatest of arguments cannot convince such stubborn people; such people will only believe when their accounts are handed over to them – but believing at that time will of no use to them.

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِيجٍ⁵

The word *حَقٌّ* as used in verses 19 and 42 of this *sūrah* signifies the Hereafter; however, it is evident from the words *لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ* (when it came to them) that in this verse it signifies the Qur'ān which is informing people of the Hereafter but people are denying it; they are putting forth as excuses the doubts which were referred to in the previous verses to deny it; these people through these doubts are trying to give the impression that the Hereafter is in fact highly improbable and that if they are denying it, they have very cogent reasons for it. However, the fact of

5. In fact, they have denied the truth after it has come to them. So they are now in a state of open contradiction regarding their views.

the matter is that they have denied an obvious reality and that too when it came to them with full clarity.

It is evident from the words لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ that the Hereafter which the Qur'ān is informing people of was an incontestable reality even earlier but till now if they were raising doubts against it they did have an excuse for they were unlettered people who were not aware of the Books of God; however, what excuse can they put forth now when they are denying a reality which is shining over their heads like the midday sun.

The expression فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِجٍ in أَمْرٍ مَّرِجٍ is explained by lexicographers as أمرٌ مختلطٌ and أمرٌ ملتبسٌ which means a situation in which there is a very clear contradiction and conflict. The word مَرَجَ means to mix up. In Sūrah Raḥmān, it is said: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ (٥٥: ١٩) (He has let loose the two oceans: they meet one another, (55:19)). This word portrays very precisely the situation in which these people found themselves in after rejecting the Qur'ān: they were in a state of contradiction with regard to their views, for on the one hand, they affirm God and all His attributes which necessitate the Day of Judgement and other hand deny the Day of Judgement which is an obviously requirement of this affirmation. In this manner, they are inflicted with such a mental anxiety that they are not finding any way to get out from it. The only way to come out of it is the one which the Qur'ān is informing them of; however, they are not prepared to accept it whereas the essential outcome of denying the truth is that in order to justify this denial whatever excuse a person tries to fashion out only brings out the baselessness of his stance. The Qur'ān has pointed to this contradiction of stance in Sūrah Dhāriyāt the counterpart of this sūrah in the following words: إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ (٥١: ٨) (indeed you are in a state of great contradiction, (51:8)). This issue has been fully explained in Sūrah Naml under the following verse: بَلْ أَدَارَكَ عَلْمُهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ (٢٧: ٦٦) (in fact their knowledge about the Hereafter is in doubt, (27:66)). Readers may look it up in case they want to study it in detail.

It may be kept in consideration that the greatest role in a person being misguided is played by this contradiction in his stance: either because of laziness he gathers in his mind all kinds of correct and incorrect views or while pursuing his whims and desires tries to amalgamate incorrect views with correct ones the result of which is that his life becomes an embodiment of contradiction. If a person keeps analyzing his views, does not allow his critical ability to die away and in pursuance of whims and desires does not amalgamate evil with the truth, he can remain shielded from the trials of Satan – but few people can do this.

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ (٦) وَالْأَرْضَ
مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ (٧) تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ
عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ (٨)⁶

In these verses, the Almighty has directed the attention of the rejecters of the Day of Judgement to His obvious signs of power, providence and wisdom which are evident everywhere, and are enough to remind and create awareness in every person who has a heart vibrant for the truth.

First and foremost, attention is directed to His great power and wisdom: have they not seen how the Almighty has raised high the heavens over their heads and decked it with stars; it is a miracle of God's power and wisdom that they do not see any fissure in this extensively laid out roof. The implication is that how can recreation be difficult for someone whose majesty of power and wisdom they see above their heads?

After this, besides His power and wisdom, attention is directed to the signs of His providence and sustenance. They are asked to observe the earth below their feet – how it has been spread out below them and in order to maintain the balance of the earth has nailed mountains into it and has caused to grow a variety of vegetation which becomes a source of sustenance for human beings and the sight of which is a treat to their eyes. The implication is that how can recreation be difficult for someone whose majesties of power, wisdom and providence they are witnessing? Will the Lord Who has made such arrangements for their nourishment leave them to eat, live and be merry without calling them to account.

The verse *تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ* implies that the Almighty has made evident in the heavens and the earth His signs of power, wisdom and providence so that they can remind and enlighten those who take heed. The word *تَبْصِرَةً* means to create insight so that they are able to go past the external form and see what is beneath it, while the word *ذِكْرَى* means to bring someone out from his state of apathy and indifference. The implication is that the Almighty has filled every nook and corner of this universe with miracles and signs which are enough to open eyes and jolt and awaken hearts; however, these miracles can only be effective for those who are ready to accept their influence. For people who by becoming slaves to the material world have lost this subtle sense in them,

6. Have they not observed the sky above them? How We have fashioned and adorned it, and it has no fissure in it. And We spread the earth and set upon it mountains, and brought forth in it all kinds of beautiful things for the insight and reminder of for every heedful person.

this universe is a place of pitch darkness. Here readers may refresh in their minds what I have referred to in this *tafsīr* many a time: this world did not require for its existence and sustenance the diversity, variety and tint which is evident from every nook and corner of it. However, the reason because of which the Almighty has generously shown these majesties in this world is that the subtle sense which is awakened by power, wisdom, beauty and munificence is awakened and a person learns and understands the lesson of wisdom writ large on every leaf of this orchard; however, for this it is essential that a person use the ability of being reminded which the Almighty has innately blessed him with. If a person does not use this ability, then the Almighty does not care about such thick-headed animals. If He has blessed a person with the freedom of will, then this necessitates that a person value and honour the comprehension he has been given and move forward under its direction. If he does so, he is blessed with more light from God, otherwise whatever had been given to him is confiscated because of this ungrateful attitude.

Other verses of the Qur'ān also state what is mentioned in these verses. For assurance and satisfaction of hearts, some verses are cited below.

In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, people who regarded being created a second time as improbable are addressed thus:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ (١٧:٩٩)

Do they not see that the God Who has created the heavens and the earth has power to create their like? (17:99)

This very doubt of the rejecters of the Hereafter is answered in Sūrah Nāzi'āt in the following words:

أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا وَأَعْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ
ضُحَاهَا وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا
مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ (٢٧-٣٣: ٧٩)

Is it more difficult to create you or the sky? He made it and raised high its roof; then perfected it, covered its night and uncovered its day, and after that spread out the earth, and He brought forth from it, its water and its fodder, and set firm mountains over it as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle. (79:27-33)

A deliberation on these verses will show that they contain all the

aspects of power, greatness, wisdom and providence more extensively as found in the under discussion verses of Sūrah Qāf which are used as bases to adduce to the bringing about of the Day of Judgement, its need and it being a requisite of God's attributes

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ (٩) وَالتَّخْلَ بِاسِقَاتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيدٌ (١٠) رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَّيْتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ (١١)⁷

These verses direct attention towards the signs of the heavens and the earth from another aspect evident from which is an argument in favour of *tawhīd* since there is found great harmony between the two. The elements of providence found in them necessitate reward and punishment and the way rain enlivens a barren piece of land also brings the scenario of life after death before a person.

The expression مَاءً مُبَارَكًا refers to rain which is a means of lushness and luxuriance. At times, rain cause havoc and destruction instead of luxuriance and it assumes the form of punishment for nations. Here the attribute مُبَارَكٌ (blessed) dispels this doubt.

The expression حَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ refers to crops which are harvested and which are stocked like wheat etc. The reason that حَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ is mentioned besides orchards is to direct attention to the elaborate arrangement of providence made by the Almighty for His servants: He created for them fresh and delicious fruit in orchards and nutritional crops which can be stored once they are harvested and can be benefited from continuously.

Consider now the next verse: وَالتَّخْلَ بِاسِقَاتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيدٌ. Apparently, there was no need to mention التَّخْلَ after جَنَّاتٍ; however, the reason that a specific category has been mentioned after the general one is that this was a special grain found in Arabia which was the best fruit for them and also a means of fulfilling their nutritional needs. Reference to the height of the date palms and to the clusters of dates is to awaken the sense of observation and the feeling of gratitude in the addressees so that they see these signs of providence and be moved the way sensitive and vibrant hearts are.

Consider the expression رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ. The layered clusters of dates bear witness from their very form that the Creator has so copiously used His

7. And We sent down blessed water from the skies with which We thence brought forth gardens and the harvest grain and tall palm trees stacked with clusters of dates, as a means of sustenance for men. And thereby We enlivened a dead piece of land. Likewise, after death shall you rise from the earth.

power, wisdom and creativity so that His servants are able to benefit from these clusters, observe His wisdom and providence in them and recognize the obligation they owe to these favours: they shall one day be question about them.

The meaning conveyed by the words وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ is the central theme of the *sūrah*. Among the benefits and blessings of rain which they are witnessing is also the fact that dead and barren pieces of land which do not have any life at any place are enlivened and rejuvenated with just one burst of rain. Rising of the dead should be regarded analogous to this with which they are being informed of; however, they regard it to be impossible.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ (١٢) وَعَادُ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطِ (١٣)
وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ (١٤)⁸

This is a warning to the Quraysh that before them the people of Noah (sws) the dwellers of the al-Rass valley, the Thamūd, the ‘Ād, the Pharaoh, the brethren of Lot, the companions of the Wood and the people of Tubb‘a also denied after the Almighty had made the truth conclusively evident to them. At last, the fate of rejection which they had been warned of appeared before them. In a similar manner, these Quraysh have also become persistent on rejection; so, the punishment they are being warned of will definitely visit them and no power in the heavens and the earth will be able to save them from God’s grasp. This is a reference to the practice of God which necessarily comes into play once the truth is conclusively conveyed – a practice to which we have been continuously alluding to in this *tafsīr*.

This warning has been referred to in verse five earlier. However, after referring towards it, the direction of the discourse changed to arguments which substantiate the Hereafter. After furnishing these arguments, this passing reference is elaborated upon: if these people are audacious enough to reject the Hereafter, they should just observe the devastating fate of previous nations who denied their respective messengers.

The nations which are mentioned here have already been mentioned in previous *sūrahs* from various aspects, I have tried to explain their historical status wherever needed. The companions of al-Rass have been

8. Before them the people of Noah and the dwellers of the al-Rass valley, the Thamūd, the ‘Ād, the Pharaoh, the brethren of Lot, the companions of al-Aykah and the people of Tubb‘a also denied. All of them denied the messengers; so Our punishment descended upon them.

mentioned in Sūrah Furqān verse thirty eight. While explaining this verse, I have cited the opinions of various exegetes and also stated my preference. Though nations are not cited here in chronological sequence, yet the mention of the companions of al-Rass right after the people of Noah (sws) shows that they belonged to the ancient nations of Arabia most of whose history has been obliterated.

The words *كُلُّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ* show that the companions of al-Rass denied the messenger sent to it. As a result, the punishment of God visited them and destroyed them. A narrative recorded in *tafsīr* books says that these people had buried their messenger in a well. The word *rass* means a well and thus these people came to be known as the companions of al-Rass. However, this report does not seem to be true. There is no authentic information regarding a messenger being killed by his nation. Even if the word *rass* means a well, it is not necessary for this incident to be true for these people being ascribed to al-Rass.

The reason that the nation of the Pharaoh is not mentioned with the Pharaoh is that it was the Pharaoh who was the real culprit. In Sūrah Tāha, the words are: (٧٩:٢٠) وَأَصْلَ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَى (for Pharaoh misled his people: he did not guide them, (20:79)) and in Sūrah Nāzi‘āt the words are: (١٧:٧٩) اذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى (go you to the Pharaoh; he has transgressed all bounds, (79:17))

The nation of Tubba‘ are mentioned in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Dukhān.

أَفَعَيَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ (١٥)⁹

In verses 6-11 earlier, the Almighty has emphatically directed attention to His power and wisdom which can be seen in every nook and corner of this universe and the purpose, as is pointed out above, was to persuade people who would regard recreation after death to be an improbable phenomenon. A question is posed before these people: do not such people see the heavens and the earth created by God; was He unable to create them the first time. The expression *عَيَّيَ بِالْأَمْرِ* is explained by lexicographers as *إِذَا لَمْ يَهْتَدِ لَوَجْهِ عَمَلِهِ*.¹⁰ This means that a person is powerless to do something and he is unable to understand how to undertake a task.

The words *بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ* signify the fact that though these people cannot dare say that the Almighty was powerless in creating the

9. Were We not able to create the first time? In fact, these people are in doubt about being created a second time.

10. See, for example: Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, 1st ed., vol. 15 (Beirut: Dār ṣādir, n.d.), 111-112.

heavens and the earth the first time; they acknowledge that God is their creator; however, they are doubtful whether He can create them again. In my opinion, this verse has a sarcastic ring in it. In other words, when they can see from their very eyes that creating them the first time was not at all a bother for God, how can it be a bother to recreate them. These naïve people should be asked that whether creating the first time is difficult or the second. If an artist can draw an illustration the second time better than the first, then why cannot God create more easily the second time?

Section II: (Verses 16-35)

In the succeeding verses, first the elaborate arrangement made by the Almighty in recording the deeds and words of a person is mentioned. After that, the advent of Day of Judgement and bringing forth of the criminals is portrayed. Further ahead, casting of these criminals into Hell and their mutual condemnation and cursing is depicted. After that, details of the blessings and favours of God which will be bestowed by Him on the righteous is mentioned.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (١٦)
 إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ (١٧) مَا يَلْفُظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ
 رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ (١٨) وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ (١٩) وَنُفِخَ فِي
 الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ (٢٠) وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَها سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ (٢١) لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي
 غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ (٢٢) وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا
 لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ (٢٣) أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ (٢٤) مَّتَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ (٢٥)
 الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ (٢٦) قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَمْتُهُ
 وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (٢٧) قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ
 (٢٨) مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ (٢٩) يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِلْجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتَ
 وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ (٣٠) وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ (٣١) هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ
 أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ (٣٢) مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْعَلِيمَ (٣٣) وَجَاءَ بِقُلُوبٍ مُّنِيبٍ (٣٣) ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ
 ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ (٣٤) لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ (٣٥)

And We created man and We know the thoughts that arise in his heart, and We are closer to him than his life vein. (16)

Beware of the two collectors collect – one seated on the right and the other on the left. Not a word he utters but there is by him a vigilant guardian. (17-18)

And the agony of death arrived with the certain reality. This is what you had been avoiding. And the trumpet shall be sounded. That day shall be the day on which Our warning will materialize. And every soul shall come forth with one who drives him on and another who bears witness. You remained heedless of this day, so We have removed your veil. So sharp is your eyesight today. And his companion will say: The one who was in my custody is present here. Cast into Hell every ungrateful person, every enemy, forbiddener of good and every doubting transgressor who has set up another god besides Allah; so, hurl him into a severe torture. (19-26)

His companion Satan will say: “O Lord! I did not make him rebellious; in fact, he himself had gone far astray.” It will be ordained: “Dispute not in My presence now; I had warned you before hand. My Word does not change and I do not the least injustice to my servants.” (27-29)

Remember the day when We will ask Hell: Have you been filled?” And she will answer: “Are there any more?!” And Paradise shall be brought close to the righteous, though it shall not be far away. It will be said: This is what had been promised to you for every person who turned to God and had heeded the limits set by God, who had feared the Merciful God, though he had not seen Him, and has come with a heart inclined. Enter this Paradise in peace. This is the eternal day. They will get whatever they will wish for and We have for them even more than this. (30-35)

Explanation

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (١٦)¹¹

Just as the naïve are inflicted with doubt regarding the Day of Judgement that how is it possible for someone to recreate human beings once they die and their bodies decay into dust, quite similarly, many are also inflicted with the doubt that who can keep record of all the open and hidden words and deeds of a person so that one day he holds each person responsible and reward or punish him. Both these doubts are two sides of the same coin. For this reason, in verse four earlier both are briefly answered. Later, the first one is refuted in detail. Now in this verse the

11. And We created man and We know the thoughts that arise in his heart, and We are closer to him than his life vein.

second one is taken up and arguments are presented to answer it. The verse says that it is God Who has created man and what to speak of His words and deeds even what comes in his heart is also known to Him. In other words, when God is the Creator and He alone has created man and given him a physical form, it is essential that God be aware of each of his body parts and their functions. To draw attention to this very reality, the words used in Sūrah Mulk are : (۱۴ : ۶۷) أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ (would He not know Who has created? (67:14)). If a Creator is not aware of all the minute details of His creatures, how can He make arrangements for their protection and sustenance.

The word وَرِيدٌ refers to “life vein”. This is a very common Arabic idiom which is used to express extreme nearness. The implication is that no one should be misled by the fact that if he is not seeing God, then God is also not able to see him. He is closer to every person than his life-vein. His knowledge and His power embraces every individual from every aspect and both his hidden and apparent are before Him all the time.

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ (۱۷) مَا يَلْفُظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ (۱۸)¹²

The expression عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ with its suppressions revealed is thus: عَنِ الْيَمِينِ قَعِيدٌ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ (one sitting on the right and one on the left). This suppression is because of customary brevity of Arabic. Examples can be seen in the previous *sūrahs*.

These verses mention a further arrangement made by the Almighty to preserve the record of words and deeds of people. In the first place, God is Himself full aware of what frequents in the hearts. Moreover, for the purpose of conclusive communication of the truth, He has deputed two angels each on a person, one of whom sits on this right and the other on his left. A vigilant sentinel is there to note down each and every word he utters.

Though recording of deeds is not mentioned in words, it has to be considered as understood on the principle of mentioning dominant elements and suppressing secondary ones. This is because if there is an arrangement to note down each and every word uttered by the tongue, then the arrangement to note down deeds done by the hand and foot is even more likely to have been made. It is evident from narratives that there is division of labour between these two angels. The angel on the

12. Beware of the two collectors collect – one seated on the right and the other on the left.. Not a word he utters but there is by him a vigilant guardian.

right keeps record of a person's good deeds and words while the one on the left keeps record of a person's bad deeds and words. Since in the issue of testimony, the evidence of two witnesses is considered reliable in religion, the Almighty has deputed two angels each on a person.

It is also evident from this verse that the thoughts of a person are not accessible to these angels. It is only God Who has knowledge of the unseen and it is His attribute of hiding faults of His creatures that the thoughts of the hearts are only known to Him.

Besides this arrangement, the Almighty has made another arrangement for the conclusive communication of the truth: the hands, feet, ears and eyes of a person will also bear witness before the Almighty. Whatever we are uttering is being preserved by our ears and whatever we see is being recorded by our eyes. Similar is the case with other limbs. Whatever we do or say we do before the divine guards through limbs blessed by God. So how great is this foolish notion that how can God know each and every word and deed of each and every person so that He may call him to account.

In the expression *إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ* a verb is suppressed before *إِذْ* as per common linguistic principles of Arabic. Here since indifferent elements are being reminded of about a reality, the suppressed verb would be one which is instrumental in warning the addressees. Thus for example, it could be: "Remember" or "Keep in mind". I have translated the verse keeping this in view. Al-Zamakhsharī has adopted another view;¹³ however, I do not find myself in agreement with it.

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ¹⁴ (١٩)

The word *حَقٌّ* refers to the Day of Judgement which the Qur'ān is informing them about and whose denial is mentioned in the previous verse. Since it is a certain and incontestable reality, the word *حَقٌّ* is used for it. The past tense used is to express its certainty. The implication is that people should not regard it to be far off; it is at hand. The time left for life is the very time left for the Hereafter to arrive. As soon as the unconsciousness of death comes, the Hereafter will come. This situation will tell them that the very thing they tried to evade has appeared.

It is to this very aspect of the Hereafter which certain narratives point.

13. See: Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa 'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*. vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, n.d.), 387.

14. And the agony of death arrived with the certain reality. This is what you had been avoiding.

One of them says: *مَنْ مَاتَ فَقَدْ قَامَتْ قِيَامَتُهُ* (he who died his Day of Judgement has come).¹⁵ The reason for this is that the life of Barzakh after death is just a prelude to the Hereafter. It is with death that the circumstances of the Hereafter begin. The trueness of faith and its fate is borne witness to and the evil fate that the disbelievers will meet commences at this instance – the very fate they used to deny in the previous world. No possibility of doubt remains after this for anyone.

The words *ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ* can be an expression of the situation and they can also be a verbal expression. In other words, at that time they will see what they had been denying has come upon them at last. The verb *حَادَ يَحِيدُ* means to walk evading the path. This is a very apt depiction of the attitude regarding the Hereafter of these people who follow their desires. If they lead a life while evading the Hereafter, it is not because arguments which are in its favour are not known to them for its signs are found at every step but people who do not want to tread the right path walk while evading them; however, what will they do when it will stare them in the eyes.

*وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ (٢٠)*¹⁶

After this, the only phase which remains is that of sounding the trumpet. It shall be sounded and the day will arrive which they are being threatened with. This too because of its certainty has been expressed in the past tense so that it can be picturized before the eyes. The implied meaning is that people should not be misled by the fact that life, then death, then *barzakh* and resurrection are far off. As soon as the trumpet is sounded, they will think that the period they thought as long has passed in the blink of an eye.

*وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ (٢١)*¹⁷

This verse refers to the next phase after the trumpet is sounded: on that day, every soul will be brought forth before God such that one angel will be deputed to drive him from behind and another will be deputed on him as a witness to the record of his deeds. This is the meaning evident from the verse and our early scholars too have interpreted it thus. Some people

15. Al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, vol. 12, 163.

16. And the trumpet shall be sounded. That day shall be the day on which Our warning will materialize.

17. And every soul shall come forth with one who drives him on and another who bears witness.

have regarded one and the same angel to be implied as the beckoner and as the witness: it is he who will drive the soul and it is he who will bear witness. Some others regard the one who drives forth as an angel and regard the soul and its deeds to be the witness. Both these views in my opinion are weak. The first of these is not supported by linguistic principles and the second has an element of artificiality in it – something which the words of the verse are forsaking.

Some others have regarded these two angels to be the same two which were referred to in the previous verse; however, this view too is untenable. Both these angels, as is evident from the verse, are deputed to keep a record of his words and deeds. If both of them are required to bring forth a soul in the court of God, then both should have the same status: both should be presented as witnesses. There is no plausible reason that if both were deputed for the same purpose, then why should the status of one of them change? Nevertheless, none of these views is without flaw. What is evident from the words of the verse is what I have alluded to earlier: after the trumpet is sounded every soul will be brought before God such that one angel will be driving it forward from behind and another will be in front of him having the record of his words and deeds and will act as a witness.

لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ (٢٢)¹⁸

At that time, the Almighty will inform them that they were totally indifferent to this day and that now the veil stretched across their eyes has been removed by Him.

The words *فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ* (so sharp is your eyesight today) are meant to humiliate and mock them: today their eyes are very sharp! The possibility of the event they could not see at all has now come before them with all its minute details.

This verse does not contradict the verse which says that those who deny the signs of God will be raised up blind on the Day of Judgement. I have already explained the context and occasion of both.

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ (٢٣)¹⁹

The word *قَرِين* refers to either of the driver or the witness which will

18. You remained heedless of this day, so We have removed your veil. So sharp is your eyesight today.

19. And his companion will say: The one who was in my custody is present here.

bring him forth before the presence of God. Some people are of the view that this refers to the satan which is deputed on every person who shows indifference to God; however, this view does not seem to be correct. Neither will this satan be in a position to say that what is in his custody is now present nor will he on that day take responsibility of leading away someone. In the succeeding verses, it is mentioned that when people will blame him for their error, he will openly acquit himself of this: قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَيْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (٢٧) (His companion Satan will say: “O Lord! I did not make him rebellious; in fact, he himself had gone far astray,” (27)). For this reason, I am of the opinion that it refers to one of the two alluded to earlier. It is however difficult to give a definite answer as to which among the two is referred to. Either of the two can be referred to because either of them can utter the words: he who was in my custody is present. Thus, exegetes have differed in this. I am inclined to believe that these words will be uttered by the one who drives on a person. The reason is that the criminal will primarily be in his custody and he will be responsible of bringing him forth to the court of God. Thus when he will enter this court, he will utter these words the way a dutiful sentinel does after discharging his duty.

الْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ (٢٤)²⁰

The word الْقِيَا is a dual. The question therefore arises that which two angels will be ordered thus. Exegetes have generally understood it to refer to the two angels mentioned earlier: the one who drives on and the witness. They will be directed to fling every ingrate and rival person into Hell. The view seems tenable. Directing them does not necessitate they themselves will cast him into Hell. This is only a statement of the command. In compliance to it, they will hand over the criminal to the angels who will be entrusted with this task. These angels will then cast them into that section of Hell which will be reserved for such criminals.

About the employment of the dual verb, al-Zamakhsharī²¹ has also cited the view of the famous literary luminary al-Mubarrad that Arabs at times use the dual verb merely to imply repetition of the verb. Thus, for example, Imru' al-Qays says: قفا نبك من ذكرى حبيب و منزل.²² Generally, people have translated it thus: “Wait both you friends of mine; let us shed a few tears in remembrance of my beloved and the place where she

20. Cast into Hell every ungrateful person, every enemy.

21. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāff*, vol. 4, 390.

22. Imru'u al-Qays, *Dīwān*, 1. .

resided.” In the light of this opinion expressed by al-Mubarrad, the word قف would mean: “Wait! Wait! ...” And there is no need to suppose two addressees. Similarly, in his opinion, the word أَلْقِيَا of the verse under discussion would mean: “Throw! Throw!” The purpose is to express anger and wrath to emphasize the directive regardless of the fact that the directive is given to two angels or to more than two. It may be kept in mind that this very directive is given in the plural in Sūrah Hāqqah: خُذُوهُ (seize him, then chain him by the neck; then into Hell cast him; then with a chain whose measure in yards is seventy bind him, (69:30-32)). I have cited Mubarrad’s view so that readers can find food for thought for further research and deliberation. However, I myself am not fully convinced of it. Nevertheless, if research furnishes satisfactory examples of this usage, it can be helpful in solving certain complex problems. As far as the circumstances of the Hereafter are concerned, a believer should profess belief in the apparent meanings of the Qur’ān and should not go after the details.

Consider next the expression of the verse: كُلُّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ. The word كَفَّارٍ means “ingrate” and “denier of the truth”. The word عَنِيْدٍ means “enemy” and “rival”. The word كفر (*kufir*) primarily is used for showing ungratefulness to God and rejection of His rights. For an upright person, there can be no dispute or debate regarding the rights of God. Such a person is not merely a كافر (*kāfir*); he is a كفار (*kaffār*) and to top this, he is also a foe and an opponent to these rights so that others too should fulfill them.

مَنَّاَعٌ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيْبٍ (٢٥) الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيْدِ (٢٦)

Those who deny God’s rights and show animosity to them will also be ones who are very stingy in fulfilling the rights of their fellow human beings and would be those who stop others from fulfilling these rights. Besides this, they will also be those who transgress limits and usurp rights. Though the word خَيْر is used for all types of virtuous acts; however, it is very common for the virtue of charity with relation to human beings. The word مَنَّاَعٌ encompasses the meanings of both to stop one’s self and to stop others. Those who are stingy are not content to remain stingy; they try to make others stingy also so that the secret of their own stinginess is not revealed. Moreover, such people are also مُعْتَدٍ

23. Forbider of good and every doubting transgressor who has set up another god besides Allah; so, hurl him into a severe torture.

(transgressors of bounds). These people are not content to merely not discharging their obligations to others; they want to transgress bounds and take way or try to take away what others have and they have in it in their possession. The word مُرِيب means a person who is inflicted with doubts. Though this word has a general connotation and includes doubts about monotheism and the Hereafter, yet in the Qur'ān, it is generally used for the doubt a person may have about the Day of Judgement – which is the very topic of this *sūrah*. Here this attribute is mentioned as the primary attribute among all others which are mentioned earlier. It is the doubt regarding the Day of Judgement which makes a person ungrateful, rival, stingy and transgressor of bounds. Thus after mentioning all the maladies, the real malady which is the source of all the others is mentioned.

The words الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ at the end with a change in style very emphatically mention polytheism. It is something which totally ravages religion and morality and is the root of spreading anarchy in the society. If someone who subscribes to it also believes in the Hereafter, then believing in it or not is equal. If a person is inflicted with the doubt that whether such and such a being is God's partner or such a beloved one can convince God on whatever he wants to, then for him the coming or not coming of the Day of Judgement is the same. In his own right, he can do whatever he likes after pleasing Him. Who can stop him from doing so?

Here the principle of Arabic should remain in consideration which I have been explaining at various places of this *tafsīr*: when attributes are mentioned without the particle of conjugation, then it means that all the attributes are simultaneously present in the noun they qualify. Another point that needs to be kept in consideration regarding these attributes is that the sequence of their mention progresses from corollaries to principles. They begin with ingratitude and stinginess and end with rejection of the Hereafter and polytheism. It is evident from this that if a person has doubts about the Day of Judgement and is also incriminated with polytheism, then his character will be the one mentioned in these verses.

The قَالِقِيَّاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ الْآلِقِيَّاهُ emphasizes the آَلِقِيَّاهُ of the earlier verse. It was stated earlier that the criminal should be thrown into Hell. After that a mention was made of his attributes and then emphatically repeated that he should be thrown into the severe torment of Hell. At another place, the Qur'ān has said that Hell has seven gates and many sections. It will be directed that people of the afore-mentioned attributes

be cast into severe torment.

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَمْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ (٢٧) قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ (٢٨)²⁴

Mentioned in these verses is the situation which will arise after the criminals enter Hell: every inhabitant of Hell will blame Satan for his error and misguidance – the Satan who, as per the established practice of God, is deputed on every person who shows indifference to the remembrance of God. When Satan will see that people are trying to incriminate him, he will try to emphatically absolve himself: رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَمْتُهُ (O Lord! I did not make him rebellious; in fact, he himself had gone far astray). This statement of Satan does not mean that he will refute his act of calling people towards error. It is mentioned in the Qur'ān that he will confess calling people to error and misguidance; however, it is the person who himself was responsible for accepting it and that he did not compel him in this regard. At another place, the words used are:

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِي (٢٢:١٤)

And when the matter has been settled, Satan will say to them: “True was the promise which God made you and He fulfilled it. And made false promises with you and so I did not keep it. And I had no power over you. I only called you, and you responded to my call. So do not now blame me, but blame yourselves. Now I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I never believed, as you did, that I was god’s equal.” (14:22)

The expression وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ refers to the fact that he had gone so far astray that there was no chance for him to return to the truth. It should remain in consideration that people who greatly distance themselves from the truth end up losing the urge to ask for guidance and Satan gets the better of them. It is as if these words express from Satan

24. His companion Satan will say: “O Lord! I did not make him rebellious; in fact, he himself had gone far astray.” It will be ordained: “Dispute not in My presence now; I had warned you before hand.

the reason of this person being caught in his web: because of his desire to deviate from the truth he had become worthy of this as per the practice of God.

It also needs to be kept in consideration that just as Satan will absolve himself from responsibility to his followers on the Day of Judgement, in a similar manner leaders who led people astray will absolve themselves from their responsibility. This has been mentioned at many places in the Qur'ān. Following is an example from Sūrah Ibrāhīm:

وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالُوا لَوْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهْدَيْنَاكُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَجْزَعْنَا أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَحِيصٍ (٢١:١٤)

And all shall appear before God. So the weak will say to those who thought themselves mighty: “We were your followers. Can you protect us from God’s punishment?” They will reply: “Had God given us guidance, we would have guided you. It is equal whether we panic or show patience. There is no escape for us.” (14:21)

The verse *قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ* says that on this argument and row between the two, the Almighty will comment that there is no use fighting in His presence. This blame-game cannot absolve anyone of his responsibility. The Almighty had already informed everyone of His threat; for this reason, the truth has been conclusively conveyed and no one is left with any excuse to deny it.

The threat refers to the one which the Almighty informed mankind right after Satan had challenged Him that if given respite he will lead the majority of Adam’s progeny astray. In response to this, the Almighty had told him to lead astray whoever he can and that He would also like to inform him that those follow him whether from among the jinn or men, He will cast them into Hell including him.

After this threat, the Almighty kept on sending His prophets and messengers who at various intervals continued to inform people of God’s guidance and of the fate met by those led astray by following Satan and his progeny. After this, these people have been left with no excuse to deny the truth. Whatever fate they will meet will be their own doing.

مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ (٢٩)²⁵

The verse emphasizes and explains what is said earlier: what the Almighty has conveyed from the very beginning cannot be changed as a result of this blame-game and of this complaining. The promises and threats of God are absolutely certain and unassailable. They are reaping only what they had sown. So they should now taste it – for the Almighty does not oppress His creatures even to the minutest degree.

The linguistic principle used in *مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ* has been explained at more than once place in this *tafsīr*: when an exaggerated statement is expressed in the negative, then the purpose is to exaggerate the negation. Thus the correct meaning of this verse would be: I am not the slightest unjust to My servants. Since our exegetes are generally not aware of this style, they interpret it to mean (He is not unjust). Most translators follow this interpretation while translating the verse even though this is a case of blatant indifference to the words of the Qur'ān. What needs to be deliberated upon is that if the purpose was to say that God is not unjust to His servants, why was the simple linguistic style abandoned in favour of *مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ*? Every word and every style of the Qur'ān occupies a specific status without understanding which the verse cannot be correctly interpreted.

Examples of this style are found in classical Arabic literature. Amongst the poets of the *jāhilliyah* period the expressions *الْمَرْءُ لَيْسَ بِقَتَّالٍ*²⁶ and *الْمَرْءُ لَيْسَ بِفَعَّالٍ*²⁷ are found in the poetry of Imru' al-Qays. His rival had threatened to wage war against him and to kill him. In response, while making fun of him, Imru' al-Qays had declared that he is threatening him while this coward has no grit to fight and kill. The words *لَيْسَ بِفَعَّالٍ* imply that he does not have the courage to do anything. Other classical poets have also used such expressions; however, alas at this moment I do not have their poetical collections with me. However, whatever I have written, I am fully convinced of it.

What is stated in this verse is also mentioned in the Qur'ān in a different style. For example, the words in Sūrah Nisā' are:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ (٤:٤٠)

25. My Word does not change and I do not the least injustice to my servants."

26. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Durayd, *Jamhurah al-lughah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 1426 AH), 49.

27. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Muqri' al-Talmasānī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Undulus al-raṭīb*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1388 AH), 119.

God is not the slightest bit unjust. (4:40)

In Sūrah Yūnus, it is said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا (١٠:٤٤)

God is not the slightest bit unjust to people. (10:44)

If someone is doubtful of the principle of exaggeration in negation I have stated above, it does not matter. For proof of the veracity of my interpretation this much is enough even if this principle is found in part in Arabic. In the presence of this principle, it must be realized that all leading authorities acknowledge the fact that if there is a possibility of two interpretations of a verse, that interpretation will be preferred which is more congenial and in harmony with the Qur'ān. There are many factors which support my interpretation.

- it is in accordance with the linguistic principles of Arabic.
- it is befittingly in accordance with the attributes of God because He is beyond any semblance of injustice; He will neither be unjust to the righteous nor to the wrongdoers.

- it is corroborated by parallels from the Qur'ān.

Amongst our exegesis, only al-Zamakhsharī²⁸ has dealt with this issue. However, the way he has tried to resolve it does support his Mutizilite stance; but at the same time raises certain other questions which he has not dealt with.

In his view, the meaning of the verse is that if God oppresses His obedient servants, then this will be a great act of oppression and God is not a great oppressor (*ẓallām*).

Many questions arise on this view of al-Zamakhsharī; for the sake of brevity, I will mention only two of them:

Firstly, the verse does not specifically deal with the obedient or the disobedient. The word used is عِبِيد (servants) which is common to all human beings whether they are pious or wicked. For every human being, it is said that God is not unjust to them. Thus this specifying has no sound grounds; in fact, it is against the words of the Qur'ān.

Secondly, if one deliberates on the context of the verse, it will become evident that the Almighty has stated these words by addressing those who had become worthy of Hell: they were told that they are facing a fate they were worthy of; God is not the slightest unjust to His people. This view of al-Zamakhsharī has been presented by some contemporary

28. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāff*, vol. 4, 392.

exegetes in another way: Since if God Who is the creator is unjust to His creation, then this will be a great oppression even though it is against God's majesty to become a great oppressor. For this reason, He has refuted His being *ẓallām*.

It seems that those who have presented the above view do not know that on the basis of this very argument the majority of our scholastics are of the view that no act of God can be called unjust or oppressive: if He casts the righteous into Hell, then this too is an act of justice and if He admits the wrong-doers into Paradise, then this too is an act of justice. A little deliberation will show that this view of early scholastics in spite of being incorrect is not as incorrect as the view of these new scholastics of this age.

Secondly, these people have not reflected on the fact that if the Almighty has negated injustice and oppression for Himself, then it is through His attributes of justice, mercy and wisdom; He has nowhere negated them by saying that since He is the Creator, hence He cannot be a great oppressor.

Another aspect which has remained elusive to these people is that if this philosophy is considered as correct, then if an act of oppression is that person by someone other than God then however extreme it may be, he cannot be called *ẓallām* (great oppressor). So much so, the Pharaoh and Hāmān and Nimrod and Shaddād can also not be regarded as great oppressors because they were not the creators and great oppression is only that which is done by the creator. God knows from which school have these people learnt this methodology of reasoning: if the Creator and Sustainer does oppression, then He will be regarded as a great oppressor and if those who are neither the creators nor the sustainers commit oppression, then they will be just oppressors.

Nevertheless whether this needless hair splitting is done by early scholastics and exegetes or those of the present age, it is the result of being non-conversant with the style of Arabic I referred to earlier.

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ (٣٠)²⁹

People should remember the day when the Almighty will ask Hell whether she has been fully filled up or not and she will reply if there is more. This question and answer could be a portrayal of the situation and also a real life matter. Whatever God has created understands His questions and also responds to Him. He is fully capable of giving the

29. Remember the day when We will ask Hell: Have you been filled?" And she will answer: "Are there any more?!"

power of speech to silent objects. It is mentioned at one instance in the Qur'ān that when the limbs of the criminals will bear witness against them, they while being wonderstruck will ask these limbs why they bore witness against them. Their rejoinder will be: أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ (God, who gives speech to all things, has made us speak, (41:21)).

This question and answer is an expression of God's self-sufficient nature and also of His intense wrath: seeing the inhabitants of Hell fill it will not be any cause of hesitancy for him; He will, in fact, have them thrown without any concern and will then ask Hell if she has been packed to capacity. The implication is that no one should be deceived by the fact that God would be saddened after throwing such a large chunk of people into Hell – people whom He Himself created. Such would be the extent of His wrath that if there would still be more inhabitants to fill Hell, He will make them her fuel.

The rejoinder of Hell: وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ can have two aspects: firstly, it will answer in the same furious tone as that of the Almighty: if there are more, I have a lot of capacity; bring them forth; secondly, after seeing the great number of its dwellers it will lose resolve and in this state of frailty it will ask if there are still more to come. Although both these interpretations are linguistically possible, I would prefer the first one. One reason for this preference is that as a result of it there comes into existence complete harmony between the poignant fury of God and the poignant fury of Hell and it is very befitting as well for Hell to comply with God's command with full force and vigour; secondly, at many places in the Qur'ān the vastness of Hell is mentioned in a style that it seems that those people are being warned who reckon that how can such a vast Hell be created which can house such multitudes of people. People may look up what I have written while explaining the following verse: لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَقْسُومٌ (it has seven gates, and through each gate they shall come in separate bands, (15:44)).³⁰ Thirdly, at some instances in the Qur'ān, Hell is portrayed as seething and fuming with venom when its inmates will be thrown into it. Thus at one place it is said: إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ (when they are flung into its flames, they shall hear it roaring and seething, as though bursting with rage, (67:7-8)). Another example can be seen in the following verse:

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُّوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ (١٠٦:١١)

30. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol. 3, 606-607.

And as for the damned, they shall be cast into the Fire, where there will be groaning and wailing. (11:106)

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ (٣١)³¹

After the inhabitants of Hell, now the fate of the inhabitants of Paradise is alluded to: they will be honoured and rewarded such that Paradise will be brought near them as a gift. They will not have to bear the brunt of a journey to travel to it; it will be very near them. The expression غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ is an accusative of state (*hāl*) from the word الْجَنَّةُ. The reason for this usage is that bringing it near should make a person think that it would be brought near from far off and will require some time; the fact of the matter is that it would be already near and to honour the inhabitants of Paradise will be brought further near them. Though the word بَعِيدٍ is technically a masculine noun yet it is not against linguistic principles for it to occur as the accusative of state from a feminine noun. Al-Zamaksharī regards this to be technically possible and I agree with his opinion.³²

هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ (٣٢)³³

Once Paradise is brought near these people they will be asked to enter it with these words: this is the reward for these people as promised to them by prophets and messengers of God; it is now being fulfilled. Before the indefinite verb تُوعَدُونَ an incomplete verb is suppressed ie: مَا كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ. This refers to Paradise; however, as per linguistic principles it means reward and gift in accordance with interpretive rules. Examples of such a style can be seen in earlier *sūrahs*.

The words لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ point to the character of the inhabitants of Paradise which made them worthy of it. Earlier in verses 25-27, the character of the inmates of Hell has been delineated. Readers may look it up; now, in contrast, the fate of those worthy of Paradise is portrayed: they were the ones who would continue to turn to God and would abide by the limits set by Him. If both these traits are reflected upon, it will

31. And Paradise shall be brought close to the righteous, though it shall not be far away.

32. Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār iḥyā’ al-turāth al-‘arabī, n.d.), 393.

33. It will be said: This is what had been promised to you for every person who turned to God and had heeded the limits set by God,

become evident that one of them relates to the heart and the other to the deeds. If a person's heart is alive and vibrant, then in all the humdrum of worldly activities his heart remains inclined to his Lord. He never becomes so negligent or arrogant that he becomes forgetful of God's limits and prohibitions and violates them. If because of some prompting from the soul, he at times exceeds limits his heart immediately realizes the blemish and through sincere repentance he reforms his attitude. These two words depict the inner and outer self of a true believer. It is evident from them that to be a sincere believer forsaking this world is not necessary; in fact, his real test is that while leading this worldly life he prove himself to be **أَوَّابٌ حَفِيزٌ**. It should remain in consideration that a believers trip to the mosque five times a day is meant to keep alive in him this spirit to turn to God. Through this it is as if a person remains attached to his centre of gravity and Satan is not able to get the better of him so that he gets involved in indecent and ignoble acts: The Qur'an says: (٤٥:٢٩) **إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ** (indeed, the prayer fends off lewdness and evil, (29:45)).

³⁴ **مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْعَلِيمَ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ (٣٣)**

Earlier on it was said about those who had become worthy of Hell that they have doubts about the Hereafter and instead of God have found other supports to cling to. There it was stated that these two things are the mother of all maladies. Here, in contrast, it is stated about the dwellers of Paradise that they are not inflicted with any such doubt; in fact, while not being able to see God, they fear him and since they did not find any other support for themselves, they came in the presence of their Lord with a heart that was always inclined to Him because they pinned all their hopes in Him and did not turn to any one else.

The attribute **مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ** in **مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ** is meant to direct attention to a great piece of wisdom: it is the essential consequence of this attribute that the Almighty at last bring forth a day in which He reward people who spent their lives as **أَوَّابٌ حَفِيزٌ** and punish those who created mischief by being **كَفَّارٌ** and **عَنِيدٌ**. If He does not do this, then it would, God forbid, mean that virtue and vice, justice and injustice are equal in His eyes even though this is absolutely against His attributes of being the Most Gracious and the Ever-Merciful. Thus at another place in the Qur'an, it is said that the Day of Judgement is a consequence of God's

34. Who had feared the Merciful God, though he had not seen Him, and has come with a heart inclined.

mercy: (١٢:٦) كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعََنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (God has decreed mercy for Himself, and shall definitely gather you on the Day of Judgement, (6:12)). Since believers fully understood this attribute of God and what it necessitates, for this reason they regarded the Day of Judgement to be a certainty and remained vigilant about it.

The letter ب in بِالْعَيْبِ is adverb of place. About the rejecters of the Day of Judgement it was said that when they would see the reality, it will be said to them: لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ (٥٠: ٢٢) (you remained heedless of this day, so We have removed your veil. So sharp is your eyesight today, 50:22). On the contrary, the believers while living in the previous world and without observing the events of the Hereafter feared their Lord merely on the basis of the arguments found in support of it within their own selves and in the world around them as well as because of the teachings of the prophets.

The expression قَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ refers to the heart which remained inclined towards God whether in happiness or in sorrow and whether in hope or in despair.

³⁵ ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ (٣٤)

They will be asked to enter Paradise with peace; they will neither have any regrets of the past nor any fear of the future. The time has come for fulfilling the promise of handing over the eternal kingdom to them. This shall never be taken away from them neither will any problem arise for them in it. The words used in Sūrah Hījr (15:46) are: ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ (١٥: ٤٦) (enter it with full safety with nothing to fear, (15:46)). It has been mentioned at many places in the Qur'ān that angels will welcome the dwellers of Paradise with peace; in fact, messages of salutation from God are also mentioned; however, this has another context. Here what is implied is the same as is corroborated by the above quoted words of Sūrah Hījr.

³⁶ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ (٣٥)

In Paradise, they will get whatever they want and God will have even more for them. The implication is that they will get what they desire; however, for them God will have such blessings as they will not even be able to imagine that they are so that they may wish for them. God will

35. Enter this Paradise in peace. This is the eternal day.

36. They will get whatever they will wish for and We have for them even more than this.

grant them these favours without they expressing any desire for them. While referring to this very fact, the words used at another instance are: (no mortal knows what bliss of the eyes will be in store for them, (32:17)).

Section III: Verses (36-45)

Coming up are the closing verses of the *sūrah*. First the Quraysh are warned that while being lured away with conceit and pride of their power and strength, they should not dare fight God. Before them, many nations have inhabited this area which were much more stronger and mightier but when God seized them, they were not able to save themselves. If they have hearts which can understand and ears which can hear, then the anecdotes of these nations have great lessons for them.

After that, the Prophet (sws) is assured that he should bear with patience whatever their enemies say. The Day of Judgement is certain to come. Weariness has not overcome God after creating heavens and the earth so that He will not be able to recreate man. So people should be on guard and the day is approaching when the caller of God will call out and every one will come out from their graves. So, the Prophet (sws) should bear with patience and diligently adhere to the prayer. It is not his responsibility to forcibly make people believers. On the contrary, he should inform of God's warning through this Qur'ān those who want to get informed.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِن مَّحِيصٍ (٣٦)
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (٣٧) وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا
 السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِن لُّغُوبٍ (٣٨) فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا
 يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ (٣٩) وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ
 وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ (٤٠) وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِن مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ (٤١) يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ
 بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ (٤٢) إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ (٤٣) يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ
 الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سَرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرُ (٤٤) نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرَ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَن يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ (٤٥)

And how many a nation have We destroyed before them who were

mightier in power than they. So they went forth in the land wherever they possibly could that is their a place of shelter? Indeed, in the account of these nations is a lesson for people who have a heart or who earnestly give ear. (36-37)

And We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days and no weariness came upon Us. So, bear then, with patience whatever they say and glorify your Lord celebrating His praises and blessings before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him in the night also, and also after the times of the sun's³⁷ descent. (38-40)

And listen for the day when the caller will call from a place very near. The day when they will hear the clamour with what is certain to come. That will be the Day of coming forth. Indeed, it is We who give life and We who give death and to Us shall be the return. On that Day, the earth shall be rent asunder from above them and they shall rush from it in haste. Easy for us is this assembling together.

We are well aware about what they say and you are not one who can force himself on them. So remind with this Qur'ān those who fear My warning.

Explanation

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ (٣٦)³⁸

This is a warning to the Quraysh that their power and strength should not mislead them into conceit and pride that they no harm can come to them. Many a nation before them who were much stronger and mightier than them were destroyed by God. If any of from them survived they had to make their way to various other countries wherever they could find refuge.

The expression *صَارَ فِيهَا ظَلَبًا لِّلْمِهْرَبِ* means *صَارَ فِيهَا ظَلَبًا لِّلْمِهْرَبِ* (and he went about find a place of refuge in the land). The words *هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ* depict the motive behind their seeking refuge in other places: in order to find shelter each person went to whichever place he could find refuge in.

This is the state of a nation faced with ruin and destruction. The influential elements of the society are destroyed and once their national

37. The word which has actually been typed here is “stars”. It obviously is a typographical error because it is evident from the author’s explanation that he is referring to the sun.

38. And how many a nation have We destroyed before them who were mightier in power than they. So they went forth in the land wherever they possibly could that is their a place of shelter?

strength is ravaged, whoever among the commoners survive, they try to seek refuge wherever possible.

It is evident from the anecdotes of various nations recorded in the Qur'ān that some of them were completely destroyed by divine punishment like the people of Noah (sws), the 'Ād and the Thamūd. In the case of some others, their arrogant and affluent classes were destroyed while their common masses were dispersed here and there. The Pharaoh and his people faced this second scenario. He and his army and court officials were completely engulfed by the sea. Whoever remained were for fear of the enemy and because of their shattered state system scattered at various places in seeking refuge.

Very similar was the situation of the people of Sabā'. Numerous people were ravaged by the deluge that came. The survivors were compelled to seek shelter and refuge in other places because of the barrenness of their lands and because of straitened economic situation. The calamities which befell the Jews were also of similar nature. Those who were saved from loot and carnage had to roam and wonder in every nook and corner of the world. Even in Muslim history, there are many exemplary tales of this sort. Are not the details of the calamities which befell Baghdād, Cordova and Delhi recorded in our history? If we read them, we will draw the conclusion that it is not merely the Quraysh who are warned in this verse, we too can learn many lessons from them on the condition that we make the effort.

Some exegetes have interpreted the expression نَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ to mean that these people in their times of ascent racked the nooks and corners of the world through their victorious skirmishes; however, this view is not correct. The word تَنْقِيبُ is not used for victorious campaigns; it is used to roam the land for finding refuge due to fear. Lexicographers have recorded this meaning, and I have referred to it earlier. Parallels from classical Arabic also corroborate this meaning only, and the subsequent expression هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ also reinforces this view, other wise it will be totally out of place.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (٣٧)³⁹

The antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun is the anecdotes of previous nations briefly referred to in the previous verse. The verse says that there are a lot of lessons to be learnt in the accounts of these nations for hearts which can really learn such lessons and for ears which are

39. Indeed, in the account of these nations is a lesson for people who have a heart or who earnestly give ear.

prepared to intently listen to what is said to them.

The word قَلْبُ is in its complete meaning ie. an alive and vibrant heart. The Almighty has made hearts to be sympathetic, to learn lessons and to be reflective. As long as a person's heart is capable of these, it is alive and as long as the heart is alive, a person is also alive. This is because real life is because of the life of the heart. If a the heart loses this ability, then a person is dead as well however much blood may run in his veins.

The words أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ imply that if the heart is not fully alive, then at least this much should be the case that if someone reasonable tells a person something, then he is able to listen to it with attention. Being attentive too is a great blessing for a person. At times, this too dispenses a person of this negligence and the ability to learn lessons is revived in him. However, if a person is such a wretch that neither is his heart alive nor is he able to pay heed to the calls of reason, then how can sense and sanity make way in him?

Though the context of these verses is to admonish and rebuke the Quraysh, it also assures and comforts the Prophet (sws): if the leaders of the Quraysh are not being touched by the Qur'ān he is reciting out to them, then the real reason for this is that neither do their hearts have the ability to be moved nor are they prepared to pay heed to his calls; so how can he make them understand his message?

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ (٣٨)
فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ (٣٩) وَمِنَ
الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ (٤٠)⁴⁰

In these verses, the discourse clearly shifts to assure and comfort the Prophet (sws) and to urge him to be patient. Initially, it is said that the Almighty has not got tired after creating the heavens and the earth so that He is unable to re-create them. He should rest assured that the Day from which they are being warned of is bound to come. He should show patience on what they say and for this he should be as diligent as he can in offering the prayer.

The creation of the heavens and the earth in six days has also been

40. And We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days and no weariness came upon Us. So, bear then, with patience whatever they say and glorify your Lord celebrating His praises and blessings before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him in the night also, and also after the times of the sun's descent.

mentioned in previous *sūrahs*. At those instances, I have explained that the word أَيَّام refers to days of God and thus means periods of time. I have also clarified the fact that when this six-day creation is mentioned in the Qur'ān, the purpose is point to the elaborate and thorough nature of creation. This shows that this world has neither come into existence accidentally nor is a means of amusement for a merry-maker; on the contrary, it is a meaningful and purposeful place and an essential consequence of this meaningfulness is that after it a day come in which this meaningfulness becomes evident.

The words وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ imply that no one should be deceived by the fact that working for six continuous days has made God weary and that He does not have the power to recreate this world. Just as God was fresh before creating them, He is still fresh after He has accomplished this task, and just as He was not unable to create them the first time. He will not be unable to create them the second time. The sentence has a ring of sarcasm in it. The implication is that those who are regarding recreation of this world to be improbable should very well know that His power and prowess is fully intact. Not the slightest change has come about in it. In a passing way, this verse also expresses scorn at the notion of the Jews mentioned in the Torah that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh.

The words فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ urge the Prophet (sws) to show patience if his opponents are rejecting him. The words مَا يَقُولُونَ refer to objections of these rejecters one example of which is mentioned earlier in verses 2-3 of the *sūrah*: (٥٠: ٢-٣) فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ أَيْدَا مِثْنًا وَكُنَّا ثُرَابًا ذَلِكْ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ (it is a very strange thing that after we die and become dust we would be returned to life again; such a return is very improbable, (50:2-3)). The implication is that this world which the Almighty has created with such thorough planning will definitely culminate in the purpose it was created for. God has not become exhausted after creating it so that He cannot recreate it; however, people whose hearts are dead will accept this reality only when they will see it from their eyes. The Prophet (sws) should be patient to the opposition of such people; so he must exercise patience until the reality manifests before themselves in a manner that they cannot deny it.

The words وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ explain the procedure through which the trait of patience can be acquired: he should be diligent in the prayer as much as he can. Without a deep relationship with God, that patience cannot be acquired which in the face of severe opposition from the adversaries makes a person persevere on right path. At another instance, this reality is point to by the words: وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

(١٢٧:١٦) (you can be patient without the help of God, (16:127)). Since the sole means to seek help from God is the prayer so wherever the Prophet (sws) has been asked to show patience on the attitude of his opponents, he has always asked to show diligence in the prayer. Examples of this can be seen in the previous *sūrah* and in the succeeding ones too, clear and effective examples of this can be seen.

The expression *سَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ* in fact connotes the prayer with respect to remembering God. This remembrance of God has two parts: *tasbīh* and *ḥamd*. The former has a ring of negation in it and means “to absolve God from things which are against His majesty,” while the latter has a ring of affirmation in it and means “to affirm all attributes which are in accordance with His majesty.” Together this negation and affirmation firmly instil the true comprehension of God in the hearts of people and it is through this firm instilment that the relationship of a person with his Creator is established on sound footings, which is the fountainhead of all patience and trust. If some weakness or imbalance arises in them, then a person’s conception of God becomes defective and this mistake totally disrupts his thoughts and deeds.

The words *قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ* refer to the times of the day in which the *tasbīh* and *ḥamd* of God is required with special emphasis. In general, the constant remembrance of God keeps a person alive. It is His remembrance through which the hearts remains alive, contented and happy; however, just as there are special seasons and times in this world for various tasks, similarly there are special times for the worship of God as well. If one reflects on the times prescribed for the prayer, it becomes evident that they are the ones in which some great change takes place in this universe, which reminds a person of the power and greatness of God and in which other prominent objects of this universe too can be witnessed prostrating before God. The most important and special time among them is the time of *fajr*. It is the time when the night folds up and the stars prostrate before the Almighty and the dawn of a new day appears. The time of *‘aṣr* is directly opposite to it when the activities of the day enter into the last phase and the sun bows its head to prostrate before the Almighty. Thus the verse first mentions these very two times: the words *قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ* refer to the time of *fajr*, and the words *قَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ* refer to that of *‘aṣr*. The importance both these prayers have in Islam is mentioned in the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth.

After mentioning two important prayers of the day, the words *وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ* allude to that fact that people should glorify their Lord at night also. There are two prayers of the night: the *‘ishā’* and the *tahajjud*

prayer. Though the latter is not an obligatory prayer, however as a means to inculcate patience occupies the most importance. This has been explained at various places in this *tafsīr*, and *inshallāh* in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Muzzammil it will be explained even further.

The word *أَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ* in *وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ* is the plural of *دُبْرٌ*, which means “back”. Generally, people have interpreted this to mean that after prostrations too, people should glorify God; however, I am inclined to believe that the word *سُجُود* here is a verbal noun and it refers to the prostrations of the sun; the prayers before the rising and setting of the sun are mentioned in the previous part of the verse. In other words, just as there are timings for prayers before the rising and setting of the sun similarly after the prostration of the sun there are times of glorifying the Almighty. Since the sun has already been mentioned earlier, specifying it was not required again. The word *أَدْبَارَ* is enough to specify that the purpose was to mention the prayer after the sun’s prostration and the prayers before whose rising and setting are mentioned earlier. Had not the words *وَمِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ* occurred between the two expressions, there would have been no difficulty in understanding this. In this case, the discourse would have been something to the effect: “Glorify God in the times before the rising and setting of the sun and after its prostration.” In this interpretation, everyone is easily inclined to think that the prostration here means the sun’s prostration. However, in case the discourse had been such, then a very important aspect of wisdom in religion would have not have become evident that has now become evident in this verse: the sequence of the prayers is commensurate with their importance and greatness in religion. As a result, it was essential that the *fajr* prayer be mentioned the foremost, followed by ‘*asr*. Thus the words *قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ* mention both these prayers. I have already alluded to earlier that the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth specially emphasize these prayers. After this, the words *وَمِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ* refer to the ‘*ishā*’ and *tahajjud* prayers which occupy the same importance in the night time prayers as is occupied by the *fajr* and ‘*asr* prayers in the day time prayers. After this, the words *وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ* refer to the *zuhr* and *maghrib* prayers which refer to the times of the descent and prostrating of the sun.

While explaining verse 78 of Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl (أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ), I have explained the various stages of the sun’s *dulūk* (descent).⁴¹ Here the word used is *سُجُود* and it too has many stages. When it is used for the sun and other stars, then it refers to their setting and descent. Here in this verse too, all these stages can be implied. In other words, when it

41. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī, *Tadabbur-i Qur’ān*, vol. 3, 773-774.

descends from the vertical direction and comes below the line of sight and then when it disappears from the horizon. The prayers of *zuhr*, *‘aṣr* and *maghrib* occur in these times. The *‘aṣr* prayer is mentioned here with special emphasis by the words قَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ with the underlying wisdom alluded to earlier. For this reason, only two prayers remain: the *zuhr* prayer which occurs in the first phase of the sun’s prostration and the *maghrib* prayer which occurs in its last phase. In other words, this verse refers to all the timings in which the five prayers are offered. The Prophet (sws) has prescribed these very times for prayers.

This subject is mentioned in the Qur’ān in different styles, and at each place I have been explaining it. It will only add to the bulk. For the satisfaction of the readers, I will cite only one example from Sūrah Ṭāhā in which this subject is discussed very clearly:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ
آثَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ (١٣٠:٢٠)

Therefore bear with what they say. And give glory to your Lord while celebrating His praises before sunrise and before sunset. And give glory to Him at night time and at the ends of the day. (20:130)

The implications of أَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ have been explained in the exegesis of Sūrah Ṭāhā. Its details can be looked up.⁴²

وَأَسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ (٤١)⁴³

The word إستمع means to attentively hear something. The verse says that if these people are denying, then let them do so. The Prophet (sws) should disregard what they say; he should attentively lend his ears for the summoner who will summon from a place near. The summoner refers to the angel who will sound the trumpet which has been referred to earlier by the words: وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ (٥٠:٢٠) (and the trumpet shall be sounded; that will be the day when Our warnings shall materialize, (50:20)). The words مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ imply that today these negligent people regard all these happenings to be far off and far-fetched; however, on that day, the ears of every person will hear this sound from a very nearby place. The style adopted here is very similar to that of the following verse of Sūrah Dukhān:

42. Ibid., vol. 4, 244-245.

43. And listen for the day when the caller will call from a place very near.

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُبِينٍ (١٠:٤٤)

Wait for the day when the sky will pour down palpable smoke. (44:10)

The purpose firstly is to portray the certainty and horrific nature of the event and secondly to the fact that its time is very near; the summoner may summon any time.

The verse addresses the Prophet (sws) and this has a great eloquence in it. It is evident from it that if these thick-headed people are showing indifferent to this event, he should let them be and he himself should be on the lookout for its arrival. This verse portrays the true picture of how a sane person should show vigilance to the Hereafter. In verse nineteen earlier, it has been stated that every person should regard it to be hovering over him; it is appended to every person's death and no one knows when he will die. Foolish are those who regard it to be far off.

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ (٤٢)

The word يَوْمَ of this verse is the permutative of the يَوْمَ of the previous verse, and the الصَّيْحَةَ refers to the cry of the trumpet. The word حَق refers to the Day of Judgement, as has been explained above in verse nineteen. Calling it thus shows that it is certain and sure to come.

The verse in conjunction with the previous one says that people should vigilantly wait for the sound of the trumpet whose shout these people shall hear on that day to herald its advent. That day will be the day for them to come out of their graves.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ (٤٣)

Mentioned here is the argument of the coming out mentioned in the previous verse: it is God Who creates and it He Who gives death, and this is something which no one can deny; so how can it be difficult for God to re-create them? This argument has been explained in detail earlier.

The words وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ bring forth another obvious argument of what is stated earlier: when it is God Who gives life and when it is God Who gives death, then this not only necessitates that God is fully capable of creating again but also that everyone will return to God. If anyone is in

44. The day when they will hear the clamour with what is certain to come. That will be the Day of coming forth.

45. Indeed, it is We who give life and We who give death and to Us shall be the return.

the deception that if ever the Hereafter comes his alleged deities and intercessors will be of help to him, he should do away with this notion. How can those who have no discretion over life and have no authority over death assume power and authority in the Hereafter.

يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ (٤٤)⁴⁶

This is a portrayal of people emerging from the graves on that day. After the trumpet is sounded, the earth shall tear asunder from above them and they will briskly come out of it. The word سِرَاعًا is an accusative of state from the genitive pronoun in عَنْهُمْ. At other places in the Qur'ān, this depiction is made by saying that just as locusts and moths quickly appear, these people with similar quickness will come out of their graves.

The words ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ imply that no one should be misled by the fact that to recover people from the earth God will have to make elaborate arrangements which He will not be able to or that this would require a lot of time. All this will take place in the blink of an eye and will be fairly easy for God.

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ (٤٥)⁴⁷

In verse thirty nine earlier, it was said that the Prophet (sws) should be patient on what they say. Now here it is said that what they say is in the knowledge of God. In other words, if He knows what they say, the Prophet (sws) should not be sad and leave the matter to God. God will take care of the situation and the Prophet (sws) should keep on doing his work with patience.

The words وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ imply that Prophet (sws) should also keep in mind that he has not been deputed to make people believers so that if they do not profess faith he will be held accountable for it. His responsibility is only to remind people, and this he should keep doing. If they do not profess faith, then they themselves will bear the consequences.

The sūrah ends on the note it began with: فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ. It began with the mention of the Qur'ān. At the end, a reminder is sounded again that the Prophet's responsibility is only to remind and the Qur'ān suffices as a reminder. He should remind through the Qur'ān all those

46. On that Day, the earth shall be rent asunder from above them and they shall rush from it in haste. Easy for us is this assembling together.

47. We are well aware about what they say and you are not one who can force himself on them. So remind with this Qur'ān those who fear My warning.

who intend to fear God's warning. Those who do not want to show this fear and for the substantiation of the prophethood of Muḥammad are demanding punishment from him should be consigned to their fortunes. They shall soon see their fate.

With grace of God, I come to the end of this *tafsīr*. وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العلمين (and our last words are: "gratitude be to God alone.")

Raḥmānābād

18th January 1977 AD

27th Muḥarram al-Ḥarām 1397 AH
